



COUNSELORS & CONSULTANTS

# ERC

# FRONTLINE SUPERVISOR

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**How can supervisors support workers who are now isolated due to working from home? My workers in this situation have doubled, and I am wondering what sort of problems these employees might experience under these conditions.**

You may notice or be aware of mental health challenges impacting your employees in different ways due to the pandemic. Several reports have discussed that over 70% of employees have experienced sleep disturbances because of stress and changes resulting from COVID-19. Research has found that employee isolation can negatively affect sleep. Depression is also a disorder shown to be associated with working in isolation. Employees may be experiencing increased feelings of depression with new work-at-home schedules and the emotional burdens of COVID-19. In addition, research has shown that family conflicts can affect employee work performance and the ability to be productive when working from home. Distractions and increased stress due to balancing homeschooling and childcare as well as work responsibilities may also be present. Supervisors have the ability to listen, be supportive, and mitigate some of these factors, but it is also clear that the EAP is more important than ever for helping during these difficult times. Continue to remind your employees of the confidential and no-cost counseling services available through the EAP benefit. Keeping your employees connected to your organization, their team, and the resources available to them will help support them during the national response to the coronavirus.

Source: Mann, S. & Haldsworth, L. (2019, February 3). *The psychological impact of teleworking: Stress, emotions, and health*. Science Alert.

**As employees begin returning to work, how can I continue to support their mental health and well-being during the transition?**

Employees returning to work are experiencing a complex range of emotions. While some are enthusiastic about getting back to the workplace, others are fearful of increased exposure to the coronavirus or what the new normal at work may mean for them. For most, it will be a mix of different responses. As a leader, your role is guiding the team and addressing their concerns. Clearly and regularly communicating with your employees about what returning to work will look like for them will support a smoother transition for everyone. Discuss what measures will be taken to ensure safety and well-being, and be available to answer any questions that your team has. Especially during times of uncertainty, people crave information and a proactive plan. Being as transparent as possible will help ensure your team is well-equipped and prepared to navigate the new normal at work. Consider one-on-one meetings with employees to check in individually, see how they are doing, and respond to any concerns. Now more than ever, it's also a great time to remind employees of the EAP benefit. Leaders play a significant role in supporting employees' mental health and normalizing the use of the program. A quick announcement at the beginning of a team meeting and/or a reminder during one-on-ones can show your support for mental well-being and encourage participation with the EAP.

For more information and resources on responding to COVID-19, visit our website at <http://ercincorp.com/covid-19-response-resources/>. You'll find videos from our counseling team on topics like anxiety, as well as links to articles and informational guides. We invite you to utilize and share these resources with your team.

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